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Department of State

INCOMING TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 HA-06 AID-07 PC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 581
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

UNCLAS SAN SALVADOR 6887

ROME FOR VATICAN OFFICE

E.O. 12065: N/A
TAGS: PINS PINT SHUM ES
SUBJECT: HOMILY OF OCTOBER 5

1. SUMMARY. IN HIS OCTOBER 5 HOMILY APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR RIVERA Y DAMAS CONDEMNED ATTACKS ON AND PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH. HE BLAMED THE GOVERNMENT FOR BOTH ALLOWING AND ABETTING THESE ATTACKS. RIVERA ALSO URGED THAT THE PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN FINDING SOLUTIONS TO THE COUNTRY'S CRISIS. HE ACCUSED A MAJORITY OF LOOKING OUT FOR THEMSELVES AND WATCHING AS THE COUNTRY FELL INTO A BLOODBATH. HE ALSO APPEALED FOR THE RELEASE OF SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR DUNN AND OTHER CAPTURED PEOPLE. END SUMMARY.

2. APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR ARTUCO RIVERA Y DAMAS GAVE THE HOMILY AT SAN SALVADOR'S BASILICA OCTOBER 5. THE CENTRAL CATHEDRAL REMAINS OCCUPIED BY MEMBERS OF THE FDR.

3. RIVERA'S HOMILY DIFFERED FROM THOSE WHICH HE HAS GIVEN IN THE PAST. USUALLY, FOLLOWING A LENGTHLY RELIGIOUS PORTION, HE WILL LIST AND COMMENT FIRST ON THE PREVIOUS WEEK'S ECCLESIASTICAL EVENTS AND THEN ON THE WEEK'S POLITICAL NEWS. THIS TIME RIVERA SAID LITTLE ABOUT SPECIFIC EVENTS AND, INSTEAD, SPOKE IN GENERAL TERMS ABOUT THE HOSTILITY THAT SOME HAVE TOWARD THE SALVADORAN CHURCH AND ABOUT THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL CONSTITUTION.

4. RIVERA SPOKE IN BITTER TERMS ABOUT THE HOSTILITY THAT HAS EMERGED TOWARD THE CHURCH IN EL SALVADOR. HE DIRECTED HIS REMARKS SPECIFICALLY AT THE GOVERNMENT, ASKING WHY CHURCH BUILDINGS WERE BEING TREATED AS THOUGH THEY WERE CENTERS OF SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY. HE CITED INSTANCES OF SEMINARIES, CONVENTS AND CHURCHES BEING RANSACKED AND DAMAGED OR DESTROYED. RIVERA SEEMED BOTH SAD AND ANGRY WHEN HE REFERRED TO THE DESECRATION OF THE CHURCH'S SACRED OBJECTS. HE ASKED FOR A REASON WHY THOSE IMPLEMENTS THAT THE CHURCH USES TO MEET THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE ARE VANDALIZED. THE CHURCH, HE SAID, WANTS ONLY TO BE ALLOWED TO CARRY OUT ITS MISSION IN PEACE, THERE IS NO REASON FOR IT TO BE SUBJECTED TO THIS SORT OF PERSECUTION.

5. RIVERA BEGAN THE POLITICAL PORTION OF HIS HOMILY BY SAYING THAT IT WAS EVIDENT THAT THE COUNTRY'S SITUATION WAS BECOMING WORSE. HE SAID THAT THE NUMBER OF DEAD WAS INCREASING. HE QUOTED A FIGURE OF 4,730 DEATHS THIS YEAR. SINCE JANUARY, HE SAID, THERE HAVE BEEN MORE DISAPPEARANCES--269--THAN IN THE THIRTEEN YEARS BETWEEN 1966 AND 1979--213. IN ADDITION, THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY IS NEAR COLLAPSE, HE SAID.

6. RIVERA THEN SAID THAT THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID A COMPLETE BREAKDOWN OF THE COUNTRY IS BY PARTICIPATION OF THE MASS OF THE PEOPLE IN FINDING A SOLUTION TO THEIR COUNTRY'S PROBLEM. A MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE, HE SAID, HAVE SEPARATED THEMSELVES FROM THE CONFLICT, CONTENT TO OBSERVE THE CONTENDING FACTIONS DESTROY EACH OTHER, HOPING ONLY THAT THE CONFLICT WILL LEAVE THEM UNSCATHED. THE COUNTRY CAN NO LONGER AFFORD THIS ATTITUDE; THE HOUR OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION HAS ARRIVED, HE SAID.

6. RIVERA MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE DID NOT INTEND TO RECOMMEND THAT THE PEOPLE FAVOR ONE SIDE OR ANOTHER. WHAT HE DID INTEND TO SAY WAS THAT THE PEOPLE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS AND THAT POPULAR DECISIONS SHOULD BE RESPECTED. RIVERA CRITICIZED AND CALLED FOR AN END TO THE STATE OF SIEGE AS AN IMPEDIMENT TO THE PARTICIPATION OF THE PEOPLE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS AND, THEREFORE, TO THE EVENTUAL SOLUTION OF THE COUNTRY'S CRISIS.

7. IN HIS HOMILY RIVERA ALSO READ A LETTER FROM THE FAMILY OF AMBASSADOR DUNN TO THE POPULAR LIBERATION FORCES (FPL). RIVERA ADDED HIS OWN PLEA TO THEIR APPEAL THAT DUNN BE RELEASED. HE WENT ON TO ASK THAT VICTOR KEILHAUER BE FREED.
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EL SALVADOR

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/GIS/IPR
REVIEWED BY HR DATE 8 JUL 1982
ADDITIONAL EXEMPTIONS
PA OF DOE EXEMPTIONS

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